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Info

FROM: BERLIN

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 1349, JANUARY 17, 2 PM

EYES ONLY

President has
seen.

PRIORITY

EYES ONLY

FROM CLAY TO RUSK

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REF JCS 0109762.

I REALIZE HINDSIGHT CRITICISM OF 13 AUGUST CAN NOT BE STOPPED
ALTHOUGH ITS CONTINUING AGITATION DOES NOT HELP US HERE.

WHILE I FEEL IMMEDIATE ACTION ON GROUND HERE MIGHT HAVE SUC-
CEEDED IN BRINGING UP SOVIET TROOPS THUS FIXING RESPONSIBILITY
SUCH ACTION TO HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL HAD TO BE UNDERTAKEN
IMMEDIATELY. IT COULD NOT HAVE AWAITED, EVEN IF IT HAD BEEN
RECOMMENDED, APPROVAL FROM ALLIED CAPITALS. THUS, IF TAKEN
HERE, IT WOULD HAVE HAD TO BE UNILATERAL IN AMERICAN SECTOR
ONLY. IN MY OPINION, EVEN IF IT HAD STOPPED WALL AT EXACT
BORDER IN AMERICAN SECTOR ONLY IT WOULD NOT HAVE STOPPED
CLOSING OF BORDER A FEW BLOCKS FURTHER BACK. ULBRICHT HAD
TO SEAL BORDER TO STOP EXODUS WHICH WAS BRINGING ABOUT COLLAPSE
OF HIS REGIME. TO HAVE STOPPED THIS WE WOULD HAVE HAD TO BE
PREPARED TO MOVE IN FORCE ACROSS THE BORDER UNILATERALLY
AND INDEED WITH PROBABLY COMPLETE ALLIED DISAPPROVAL. SUCH
A MOVEMENT MIGHT INDEED HAVE HAD FAR REACHING CONSEQUENCES.

I BELIEVE CRITICISM OF PRESIDENT MOST UNFAIR IN THIS INSTANCE
AND IF ANY INVESTIGATIONS ARE INSTIGATED BY CONGRESS I WOULD
BE GLAD TO SO TESTIFY.

~~SECRET~~

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E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(D) and 5(D)

State NLK-75-110

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-2- 1349, JANUARY 17, 2 PM FROM BERLIN

HOWEVER, FOR THE FUTURE, I WOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT THIS IS WHY I CONTINUE TO ASK FOR GREATER DISCRETIONARY POWER HERE IN EVENT OF EMERGENCY. IF WE FAIL TO EXERCISE IT PROPERLY, WE HERE ARE AT FAULT. IF WE EXERCISE IT IMPROPERLY, ALMOST ANY ERROR OF JUDGMENT HERE CAN BE CORRECTED IMMEDIATELY BY THE PROMPT REMOVAL OF THE RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL. I CAN ONLY SAY THAT AS LONG AS I AM HERE AND AN EMERGENCY DOES DEVELOP I AM PREPARED TO FULLY ACCEPT INSTANT RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROPER ACTION AND SUMMARY RECALL IF IT BACKFIRES. I FEEL STRONGLY PRESIDENT IS ENTITLED TO THIS PROTECTION IF FUTURE EMERGENCY DOES DEVELOP.

TRIVERS

RJT

~~SECRET~~